

REMARKS/ARGUMENTS

In response to the Office Action dated December 29, 2004, claims 6, 11 and 21 are amended, and claims 1 and 17 are canceled. Claims 4-11, 14, 15 and 18-25 are now active in this application. No new matter has been added.

OBJECTION TO CLAIMS

Claims 1, 11, 18, 23 and 24 are objected to for having certain minor informalities. By this response, the informalities as to claims 1 and 11 have been appropriately addressed. However, it is noted that no informality has been identified with regards to claims 23 and 24.

With regard to claim 19 depending from claim 18, such dependency resulted from an amendment during prosecution and which improper numerical designation regarding dependent claims referring to a preceding claim can be handled by the Examiner by appropriately renumbering the allowed claims when passing the application to issue, which renumbering is respectfully requested.

REJECTION OF CLAIMS UNDER 35 U.S.C. § 112, SECOND PARAGRAPH

Claims 1 and 6 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 112, second paragraph, as being indefinite. In support of this position, the Examiner identifies a lack of clear antecedent basis for a recitation in claim 1. By this response, the noted point of indefiniteness has been appropriately addressed when amending claim 6 to be in independent form. Therefore, it is respectfully urged that the rejection be withdrawn.

REJECTION OF CLAIMS UNDER 35 U.S.C. § 103

Claims 1 and 17 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over Lincoln (6,005,866) in view of Muller et al. (6,246,680).

To expedite prosecution, claims 1 and 17 are cancelled.

ALLOWABLE CLAIMS

The indication that claims 4, 5, 7-10, 14, 15, 19, 20, 22 and 25 are allowable, that claim 6 would be allowable if rewritten in independent form including all the limitations of the base claim and any intervening claims and address noted indefiniteness, that claim 21 would be allowable if rewritten in independent form including all the limitations of the base claim and any intervening claims, and that claims 11, 18, 23 and 24 would be allowable if rewritten to overcome noted objections is acknowledged and appreciated.

By this response, claims 6 and 21 are amended to be in independent form including all the limitations of the corresponding base claim and to address noted indefiniteness and objections.

CONCLUSION

Accordingly, it is urged that the application, as now amended, is in condition for allowance, an indication of which is respectfully solicited. If there are any outstanding issues that might be resolved by an interview or an Examiner's amendment, Examiner is requested to call Applicants' attorney at the telephone number shown below.

To the extent necessary, a petition for an extension of time under 37 C.F.R. 1.136 is hereby made. Please charge any shortage in fees due in connection with the filing of this paper,

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including extension of time fees, to Deposit Account 500417 and please credit any excess fees to such deposit account.

Respectfully submitted,

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